



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Chief of Staff

Washington, D.C. 20201

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TO: Heads of Operating Divisions and Staff Divisions

SUBJECT: HHS Internet Domain Names

As use of the Internet has grown and become an important tool for conveying information, it has become common practice for HHS agencies and offices to create web sites specifically designed around a particular program, initiative or activity. Such sites can be a very useful and effective method for packaging and presenting information to a variety of audiences. In many cases, the sponsoring agency or office desires a unique second-level, Internet domain address to easily identify and promote a new program-specific web site (e.g. www.program.gov or www.initiative.gov).

Recently, however, there have been an increasing number of requests to the Department for unique second-level Internet domain names. Some of these requests have been for domain names that are similar to existing HHS second-level domain names, while others are for domain names intended for a specific agency-level program or activity, but that ideally could be used to capture other related department-wide activities on the same topic.

The Department's current policy on domain names states:

"...the Registration Policy for Domain Names representing the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and its Agencies shall follow the normal Internet naming convention for US Federal agencies of .GOV and HHS, that is: HHS.GOV."

"Exceptions to this policy shall be based on need reflecting major or special a) initiatives, b) mission, c) program activity, or d) communication initiatives."

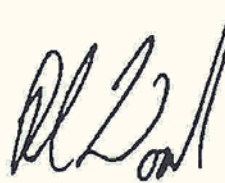
"The existing HHS policy on the use of Internet domain names requires that: A HHS OPDIV/StaffDiv/Center shall use .GOV as the Domain Name. If existing non-government Domain Names (e.g., .ORG, .COM, .NET) are in use, they must be registered with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Information Resources Management annually and granted a waiver from the DASIRM. A waiver from the DASIRM must be obtained prior to registration of any non-government Domain Names. Use of these names is discouraged."

(The full HHS policy can be viewed at: <http://www.hhs.gov/read/irmpolicy/0008.html>, dated January 8, 2001)

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(incoming)

In keeping with the Secretary's desire for a more unified approach to Departmental management, effective immediately, the Department is implementing a moratorium on all new and pending requests for second-level Internet domain names. While we do not expect to approve any new domain names during this moratorium, requests for exceptions will be considered by the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs and the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Budget, Technology and Finance. Our goal is not to restrain the use of agency-sponsored Web sites to reach our customers, but rather to amplify them in ways that builds even greater awareness of our agencies' varied programs and activities.

As we move closer to the completion of a new HHS web portal site later this year, we will be reviewing the Department's existing domain name policy with these goals in mind to determine what modifications, if any, are needed to strengthen and improve the use of second-level domain names.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bob Wood", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bob Wood